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The Role of Librarians and Partnership Challenges in Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation

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ABSTRACT
Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation (TPBIS) demands a fundamental shift in the librarian's role. Librarians are no longer merely collection managers; they are increasingly expected to serve as learning facilitators, mentors, and community connectors. This article examines the role of librarians and partnership challenges in the implementation of TPBIS based on recent literature. A narrative literature review was conducted on 15 relevant articles published between 2021 and 2026. The analysis grouped findings into four themes: librarian roles, competencies and training, partnership challenges, and sustainability factors. The review reveals that librarians' roles have consistently expanded into social functions; however, program sustainability is often constrained by inadequate training, weak organizational support, and fragile partnerships. Stable partnerships require shared goals, clear role division, agreed communication, shared leadership, and trust. This article concludes that strengthening librarian capacity and designing deliberative partnerships are key determinants of TPBIS sustainability. The study contributes a synthesized framework for understanding the human dimension of library transformation, which remains underexplored in Indonesian library studies.

INTRODUCTION

Public libraries worldwide face increasing pressure to demonstrate their social relevance amid rapidly changing community needs. In many countries, libraries are no longer perceived merely as repositories of books but as active agents of community development, social cohesion, and lifelong learning. This global shift reflects a broader recognition that libraries function as social infrastructures spaces where citizens access information, build networks, and develop capacities for civic and economic participation (Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023). As a result, libraries are increasingly evaluated not only by the size of their collections but by their contributions to community well-being and social inclusion.

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In Indonesia, this global pressure has materialized into a national policy agenda known as Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation (*Transformasi Perpustakaan Berbasis Inklusi Sosial*, or TPBIS). The program positions libraries as spaces for collective learning, empowerment, and social inclusion, particularly for underserved communities. TPBIS encourages libraries to move beyond traditional services and to design programs that respond to local social and economic needs, such as literacy training, entrepreneurship workshops, and community-based learning activities (Yunus et al., 2024; Haryanto et al., 2024). Through this agenda, the library is reimagined as a catalyst for community development rather than a passive service institution.

The Indonesian experience further illustrates the importance of stakeholder support in sustaining social inclusion-based library transformation. The National Library of Indonesia has emphasized stakeholder commitment and support as important elements of sustainable library transformation, including advocacy toward government leaders, relevant stakeholders, and the private sector to obtain policy and budgetary support (National Library of Indonesia, 2021). More recent research also indicates that partnerships with private-sector organizations can contribute to the implementation of social inclusion-based library programs, although challenges may remain in ensuring that collaborative initiatives produce sustainable impacts on community literacy and economic empowerment (Hamudy, Rifky and Hayuningtyas, 2026). These conditions demonstrate that partnerships can create opportunities for library development while simultaneously presenting institutional and operational challenges that need to be managed carefully.

Within this framework, the librarian's role has shifted from collection management toward learning facilitation and community connection (Wickramarachchi, 2021; Safira & Laksmi, 2021; Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023). Librarians are now expected to act as mentors, facilitators, and community connectors who understand local social dynamics and respond to the needs of diverse user groups. Such a transformation demands not only technical competencies but also interpersonal skills, communication, collaboration, cultural intelligence, and emotional labour (Safira & Laksmi, 2021; Shahzad et al., 2023). In other words, the human dimension of library transformation has become as important as its infrastructural and technological dimensions.

However, this role shift is not without obstacles. A growing body of literature indicates that the sustainability of TPBIS programs is frequently constrained by inadequate training, weak organizational support, and fragile partnerships (Yunus et al., 2024; Wickramarachchi, 2021; Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023; Wanner-Freyland & Miljand, 2026). Several studies have documented that program success often depends on a single highly initiative-taking librarian, making sustainability vulnerable when team, leadership, or community partner support is weak (Hamudy et al., 2026; Safira & Laksmi, 2021). Partnership challenges such as low partner commitment, unclear role division, and weak inter-agency coordination further complicate the implementation of TPBIS (Johnson & Wahler, 2023; Latulippe et al., 2023; Sherman et al., 2025).

While several studies have documented individual program implementations, few have synthesized the human dimension of this transformation particularly how librarians' roles are redefined and why partnerships so often fail to sustain. Existing Indonesian studies tend to be descriptive and localized, focusing on single libraries or provinces, and rarely connect their findings to broader theoretical discussions on social infrastructure, partnership governance, or professional competence development (Silvina et al., 2023; Nuraini & Widiyarta, 2025). Meanwhile, international

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studies offer valuable frameworks on partnership and social inclusion but are often situated in contexts that differ significantly from Indonesia's institutional and cultural landscape (Latulippe et al., 2023; Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023; Wanner-Freyland & Miljand, 2026). This gap calls for a synthesis that bridges local TPBIS experiences with international insights on librarian roles and partnership sustainability.

This article addresses two questions: first, how has the librarian's role evolved within TPBIS; second, what partnership challenges most commonly emerge, and what strategies can address them? By answering these questions, the article contributes a synthesized understanding of the human and relational dimensions of library transformation, an area that remains underexplored in Indonesian library and information science (LIS) literature. Practically, the findings are expected to inform library managers, policymakers, and educators in designing training programs and partnership frameworks that support the long-term sustainability of TPBIS. Theoretically, the article offers a conceptual bridge between Indonesian TPBIS scholarship and international debates on libraries as social infrastructures and collaborative public services.

METHODS

1. Research Design

This article employs a narrative literature review as its primary research design. A narrative review was chosen because the study aims to synthesize and interpret the human and relational dimensions of Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation (TPBIS) an area that is still emerging and unevenly documented in Indonesian library and information science (LIS) literature. Unlike a systematic review, which prioritizes exhaustive and replicable coverage, a narrative review allows for thematic interpretation and conceptual synthesis across studies with diverse methodological designs and contexts (Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023; Shahzad et al., 2023). This approach is therefore suitable for identifying recurring patterns, tensions, and research gaps in a field that has not yet produced a consolidated body of evidence.

2. Search Strategy and Selection Criteria

The review is based on 15 relevant articles published between 2021 and 2026. Articles were identified through searches of academic databases and reputable journal portals using combinations of the following keywords: *social inclusion-based library transformation*, *TPBIS*, *librarian roles*, *library partnership*, *community librarianship*, and *social infrastructure*. The selection prioritized studies that met three criteria: (1) they directly discussed TPBIS or social inclusion-based library transformation; (2) they examined librarian roles, competencies, or partnerships; and (3) they were published in peer-reviewed journals or reputable conference proceedings. Studies that focused exclusively on technical or infrastructural aspects of libraries, without addressing the human or partnership dimensions, were excluded.

The decision to focus on the 2021–2026 period reflects the timeline during which TPBIS gained significant policy traction in Indonesia and began to attract scholarly attention. Citation counts across the selected articles ranged from 0 to 17, with 2023–2024 studies offering the best combination of recency and citation impact. This distribution indicates that the field is still in its early stages of consolidation, and that the most recent publications particularly those from 2025–2026 have not yet accumulated substantial citation records due to their novelty.

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3. Analytical Procedure

The analysis grouped findings into four themes: (1) librarian roles, (2) competencies and training, (3) partnership challenges, and (4) sustainability factors. These themes were developed inductively by reading each article and identifying recurring patterns across contexts, then refined deductively by comparing them with established concepts in the international literature on library social infrastructure, partnership governance, and professional competence development (Latulippe et al., 2023; Johnson & Wahler, 2023; Sherman et al., 2025). Each theme was then examined for convergences and divergences between Indonesian and international findings, with particular attention to how local institutional and cultural conditions shape the implementation of TPBIS.

4. Limitations of the Method

As a narrative review, this study does not claim exhaustive coverage of all available literature on TPBIS or library partnerships. The selection of 15 articles, while based on relevance and quality, may not capture the full diversity of program implementations across Indonesia. In addition, the relatively low citation counts of several recent articles limit the ability to assess their scholarly impact. These limitations are acknowledged as inherent to the narrative review approach, and the findings should be interpreted as a synthesis of the most relevant evidence available rather than as definitive conclusions. Future systematic reviews or empirical studies are needed to test and extend the patterns identified in this article.

RESULTS

1. Overview of Reviewed Studies

The analysis is based on 15 articles published between 2021 and 2026. The reviewed studies represent diverse geographical and institutional contexts, including Indonesia (West Java, East Java, Central Sulawesi, South Kalimantan, West Sumatra), the Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Australia, Canada, and the United States. Methodologically, the studies include qualitative case studies, policy implementation analyses, ethnographic studies, systematic reviews, conceptual papers, and thematic analyses. This methodological diversity allows the review to capture both empirical findings and conceptual frameworks relevant to the role of librarians and partnership challenges in TPBIS.

Table 1. Characteristics of Reviewed Studies

No	Author(s)	Year	Method	Context	Main Focus
1	Hamudy, Rifky, & Hayuningtyas	2026	Qualitative case study	Tabalong, South Kalimantan	Private partnership, sustainability
2	Yunus, Daswati, & Natsir	2024	Qualitative policy implementation	Central Sulawesi	TPBIS implementation, capacity building
3	Haryanto, Laugu, & Zulaikha	2024	Conceptual review	Indonesia	Libraries as incubators, SDGs
4	Silvina, Prijana, & Rohman	2023	Qualitative case study	West Java	Staff training, post-program advocacy

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5	Nuraini & Widiyarta	2025	Qualitative strategic implementation	Indonesia	Training policy, APBD, CSR, mentoring
6	Wickramarachchi	2021	Conceptual	Sri Lanka	Social role of librarians
7	Safira & Laksmi	2021	Qualitative reflection	East Java	Institutional & interpersonal challenges
8	Johnson & Wahler	2023	Conceptual	Australia	Library–social work collaboration
9	Latulippe et al.	2023	Systematic review	Canada	Partnership research, disability inclusion
10	Van Melik & Hazeleger	2023	Ethnographic qualitative	Netherlands	Emotional labour, social infrastructure
11	Sherman, Cooke, & Bowen	2025	Thematic analysis	USA	Partnerships for DEAI
12	Wanner-Freyland & Miljand	2026	Qualitative barrier analysis	International	Multistakeholder partnership barriers
13	Shahzad, Khan, Latif, & Iqbal	2023	Systematic review (2002–2022)	International	Competence development, leadership
14	Karanganyar study	2024	Qualitative case study	Indonesia	Partnership support, high citation
15	Community information literacy study	2025	Qualitative implementation	Indonesia	Librarian competence, school collaboration

The reviewed studies vary in citation impact, ranging from 0 to 17 citations. The highest citation counts are found in the Karanganyar study (2024), the disability partnership study (Latulippe et al., 2023), the community librarian study (Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023), and the competence development review (Shahzad et al., 2023). Articles published in 2025–2026 generally have lower citation counts due to their recency, but they offer the most current insights into TPBIS implementation.

2. The Expanding Role of Librarians

The first major finding is that librarians' roles in TPBIS have expanded significantly beyond collection management. Across the reviewed studies, librarians are consistently described as mentors, facilitators, and community connectors (Wickramarachchi, 2021; Safira & Laksmi, 2021; Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023). This finding appears across different national contexts, suggesting that it is not a localized phenomenon but a broader shift in the professional identity of librarians.

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Table 2. Dimensions of the Librarian's Role Shift in TPBIS

Dimension	Traditional Role	Emerging Role in TPBIS	Supporting Studies
Primary function	Collection management	Learning facilitation, mentoring	Wickramarachchi (2021); Van Melik & Hazeleger (2023)
Core competencies	Cataloging, classification, retrieval	Interpersonal skills, communication, cultural intelligence	Safira & Laksmi (2021); Shahzad et al. (2023)
Relationship with community	Passive service provider	Active community connector	Wickramarachchi (2021); Sherman et al. (2025)
Work orientation	Task-based	Relational and emotional	Van Melik & Hazeleger (2023)
Evaluation criteria	Collection size, service statistics	Community impact, inclusion outcomes	Haryanto et al. (2024); Nuraini & Widiyarta (2025)
Professional identity	Technical specialist	Social facilitator	Wickramarachchi (2021); Safira & Laksmi (2021)

The reviewed studies provide specific evidence of this role expansion. Wickramarachchi (2021) describes librarians as agents of social transformation, emphasizing their responsibilities in digital literacy and community outreach. Safira and Laksmi (2021) report that librarians in East Java were expected to serve as mentors for community empowerment programs, even though many felt unprepared for this role. Van Melik and Hazeleger (2023) document how community librarians in the Netherlands engaged in emotional labour as they navigated complex social relationships with users.

The reviewed studies also indicate that this role expansion is unevenly experienced. Safira and Laksmi (2021) found that librarians in East Java often functioned as "single fighters," bearing the burden of transformation alone. Hamudy et al. (2026) reported a similar pattern in Tabalong, where program success depended heavily on one highly initiative-taking librarian. This dependence on individual actors is reported as a source of vulnerability, particularly when institutional support is weak.

Furthermore, the reviewed studies suggest that the role expansion is accompanied by new competency demands. Shahzad et al. (2023) identify leadership, communication, and continuous learning as critical competencies for value-added library services. Haryanto et al. (2024) emphasize the need for entrepreneurial and facilitation skills when libraries function as incubators for social inclusion. These findings indicate that the librarian's role is no longer purely technical but fundamentally relational and social.

3. Training as an Uneven Key

The second finding concerns the role of training. Across the reviewed studies, librarian training emerges as a recurring prerequisite for TPBIS success (Silvina et al., 2023; Nuraini & Widiyarta, 2025; Shahzad et al., 2023). Training is delivered through various formats, each with different reported outcomes.

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Table 3. Training Formats and Reported Outcomes in TPBIS

Training Format	Description	Reported Outcome	Supporting Studies
Certified staff training	Formal certification for librarians	Improved technical and administrative capacity	Silvina et al. (2023)
Implementation teams	Team-based program execution	Stronger coordination, peer learning	Silvina et al. (2023); Nuraini & Widiyarta (2025)
Technical guidance	Hands-on assistance from experts	Improved program implementation	Nuraini & Widiyarta (2025)
Sustained mentoring	Long-term mentoring relationships	Improved confidence, relational skills	Shahzad et al. (2023)
Short-term workshops	One-off training events	Limited impact on complex social problems	Van Melik & Hazeleger (2023); Johnson & Wahler (2023)
Peer learning communities	Informal knowledge sharing among librarians	Improved reflective practice	Silvina et al. (2023)

The reviewed studies consistently report that short-term training alone is insufficient when librarians must address complex social problems (Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023; Johnson & Wahler, 2023). This limitation is reported across both Indonesian and international contexts, suggesting that it is not merely a resource issue but a design issue. The studies also indicate a mismatch between training content and field realities: many programs emphasize administrative and technical aspects while paying limited attention to interpersonal and emotional dimensions of community engagement.

Silvina et al. (2023) report that training in West Java focused primarily on program administration and reporting, with limited attention to community engagement skills. Nuraini and Widiyarta (2025) note that training in Indonesia often relies on short workshops with minimal follow-up, resulting in uneven capacity among librarians. Shahzad et al. (2023) argue that sustainable competence development requires continuous learning, leadership support, and organizational commitment not one-off training events.

The reviewed studies also identify factors that enhance training effectiveness. These include mentoring relationships, peer learning communities, and opportunities for reflective practice (Silvina et al., 2023; Shahzad et al., 2023). Van Melik and Hazeleger (2023) suggest that emotional and relational competencies develop through sustained practice rather than formal instruction. These findings indicate that training design matters as much as training content.

4. Fragile Partnerships

The third and most consistent finding concerns partnership challenges. Across the reviewed studies, partnership barriers most often include low partner commitment, weak inter-agency coordination, and fragile program sustainability (Hamudy et al., 2026; Nuraini & Widiyarta, 2025; Johnson & Wahler, 2023; Wanner-Freyland & Miljand, 2026).

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Table 4. Multi-Level Barriers to Sustainable Partnerships in TPBIS

Level	Barriers	Description	Supporting Studies
Structural	Unclear role division	Partners unclear about responsibilities	Johnson & Wahler (2023)
Structural	Weak institutional mandates	Partnerships formed without formal basis	Wanner-Freyland & Miljand (2026)
Structural	Limited funding	Insufficient resources for sustained activities	Nuraini & Widiyarta (2025)
Relational	Low trust	Partners lack confidence in each other	Latulippe et al. (2023)
Relational	Poor communication	Irregular or unclear communication	Latulippe et al. (2023)
Relational	Divergent expectations	Partners have different goals	Sherman et al. (2025)
Personal	Single-fighter dependency	One librarian bears entire burden	Hamudy et al. (2026); Safira & Laksmi (2021)
Personal	Limited capacity	Librarians lack skills for partnership work	Van Melik & Hazeleger (2023)
Personal	Burnout	Emotional exhaustion among librarians	Van Melik & Hazeleger (2023)
Policy	Short-term project framing	Programs treated as projects, not transformations	Wanner-Freyland & Miljand (2026)
Policy	Weak political will	Limited government commitment	Wanner-Freyland & Miljand (2026)
Organizational	Weak leadership support	Managers not actively involved	Nuraini & Widiyarta (2025)
Organizational	No recognition for relational work	Relational work not evaluated	Shahzad et al. (2023)

The reviewed studies also identify conditions associated with more stable partnerships. Table 5 summarizes the enabling factors reported across the literature.

Table 5. Enabling Factors for Stable Partnerships in TPBIS

Enabling Factor	Description	Supporting Studies
Shared goals	Partners agree on common objectives from the outset	Latulippe et al. (2023); Johnson & Wahler (2023)
Clear role division	Each partner understands their responsibilities	Johnson & Wahler (2023)
Agreed communication	Regular and transparent communication channels	Latulippe et al. (2023)

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Shared leadership	Leadership distributed across partners	Latulippe et al. (2023)
Trust	Mutual confidence among partners	Latulippe et al. (2023); Sherman et al. (2025)
Community-oriented design	Programs designed around community needs	Sherman et al. (2025)
Joint planning	Partners involved in program design	Johnson & Wahler (2023)
Regular reflection	Partners review progress together	Latulippe et al. (2023)

These findings indicate that partnership quality not partnership quantity is the key variable. A library with a few deeply committed partners may achieve more than a library with many nominal collaborators. Sherman et al. (2025) emphasize that partnerships are most useful when they help libraries read diverse community needs and design more inclusive programs, rather than merely adding formal collaborators.

The reviewed studies also reveal that partnership failure is often predictable. When partnerships are formed without shared goals, without clear role division, and without trust, they are likely to collapse once initial funding or enthusiasm declines (Wanner-Freyland & Miljand, 2026). Hamudy et al. (2026) report that in Tabalong, partnership sustainability depended heavily on the personal initiative of one librarian, making the program vulnerable to staff turnover. Johnson and Wahler (2023) identify role clarity, funding, and sustainability as the three most common challenges in library–social work collaborations.

5. Sustainability Factors

The fourth finding concerns the factors that influence program sustainability. Across the reviewed studies, sustainability is associated with both human and institutional factors.

Table 6. Sustainability Factors in TPBIS Programs

Factor	Description	Supporting Studies
Librarian capacity	Continuous professional development, mentoring	Shahzad et al. (2023); Silvina et al. (2023)
Leadership support	Commitment from library managers and local government	Nuraini & Widiyarta (2025); Yunus et al. (2024)
Budget support	APBD, CSR, and other funding mechanisms	Nuraini & Widiyarta (2025)
Policy continuity	Long-term policy framing beyond project cycles	Wanner-Freyland & Miljand (2026)
Partnership governance	Clear roles, communication, shared leadership	Latulippe et al. (2023); Johnson & Wahler (2023)
Organizational recognition	Recognition of relational work in evaluation	Van Melik & Hazeleger (2023); Shahzad et al. (2023)
Team-based work	Distributed responsibilities across staff	Hamudy et al. (2026); Safira & Laksmi (2021)
Community engagement	Ongoing dialogue with community members	Sherman et al. (2025)

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The reviewed studies suggest that sustainability is rarely achieved through a single factor. Instead, it emerges from the interaction of human capacity, institutional support, and partnership quality. Programs that rely on a single librarian, a single funding source, or a single partner are reported to be more vulnerable to discontinuation. Yunus et al. (2024) report that in Central Sulawesi, sustainability was strengthened when local government commitment was strong. Nuraini and Widiyarta (2025) note that budget support through APBD and CSR contributed to program continuity. Hamudy et al. (2026) report that in Tabalong, sustainability was threatened by dependence on a single librarian and weak inter-agency coordination.

6. Thematic Synthesis Across Studies

To provide an integrated view of the findings, Table 7 synthesizes the four themes identified across the reviewed studies.

Table 7. Thematic Synthesis of Findings Across Reviewed Studies

Theme	Key Findings	Supporting Studies
Librarian roles	Shift from collection management to mentoring, facilitation, and community connecting	Wickramarachchi (2021); Safira & Laksmi (2021); Van Melik & Hazeleger (2023)
Competencies & training	Short-term training insufficient; need continuous, context-sensitive development	Silvina et al. (2023); Nuraini & Widiyarta (2025); Shahzad et al. (2023)
Partnership challenges	Low commitment, weak coordination, fragile sustainability, single-fighter dependency	Hamudy et al. (2026); Johnson & Wahler (2023); Wanner-Freyland & Miljand (2026)
Sustainability factors	Shared goals, clear roles, communication, shared leadership, trust	Latulippe et al. (2023); Johnson & Wahler (2023); Sherman et al. (2025)

The synthesis indicates that the four themes are interconnected. Librarian roles shape training needs; training needs shape partnership capacity; partnership capacity shapes sustainability. This interconnectedness suggests that interventions targeting only one theme for example, training without partnership governance are unlikely to produce sustainable outcomes.

Table 8. Cross-Cutting Patterns Across Reviewed Studies

Pattern	Description	Studies Reporting
Single-fighter dependency	Program success depends on one librarian	Hamudy et al. (2026); Safira & Laksmi (2021)
Training–practice gap	Training focuses on administration, not social skills	Silvina et al. (2023); Nuraini & Widiyarta (2025)
Partnership fragility	Partnerships collapse after initial funding ends	Johnson & Wahler (2023); Wanner-Freyland & Miljand (2026)
Emotional labour	Librarians experience emotional demands	Van Melik & Hazeleger (2023)

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Leadership importance	Leadership support strengthens sustainability	Yunus et al. (2024); Nuraini & Widiyarta (2025)
Community orientation	Partnerships effective when community-oriented	Sherman et al. (2025)

These cross cutting patterns suggest that the human dimension of TPBIS is not a secondary concern but a central determinant of program success. The reviewed studies consistently indicate that technical and infrastructural factors alone are insufficient to sustain TPBIS without attention to librarian capacity, partnership quality, and institutional support.

DISCUSSION

1. The Expanding Role of Librarians: From Technical Managers to Relational Facilitators

The first major finding of this review is that librarians' roles in TPBIS have expanded significantly beyond collection management. Librarians are now expected to function as mentors, facilitators, and community connectors (Wickramarachchi, 2021; Safira & Laksmi, 2021; Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023). This expansion is not merely a change in job description; it represents a fundamental shift in professional identity. Traditionally, librarians were evaluated by their ability to organize, preserve, and provide access to collections. Under TPBIS, however, their effectiveness is increasingly measured by their capacity to build relationships, understand community needs, and facilitate collective learning.

This finding aligns with international scholarship on libraries as social infrastructures (Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023). The concept of social infrastructure suggests that libraries function not only as information providers but also as spaces where social capital is built, trust is cultivated, and community resilience is strengthened. In this sense, the librarian's role becomes deeply relational: it requires interpersonal sensitivity, communication skills, cultural intelligence, and the ability to navigate organizational dynamics and community psychology (Safira & Laksmi, 2021; Shahzad et al., 2023). These competencies are qualitatively different from the technical skills traditionally emphasized in library and information science (LIS) education.

In the Indonesian context, this shift is particularly challenging because formal LIS education has historically prioritized technical competencies such as cataloging, classification, and information retrieval over social and relational ones. As a result, many librarians enter TPBIS programs without adequate preparation for the social dimensions of their new roles. This gap is compounded by the fact that TPBIS is often implemented in resource-limited settings, where librarians must simultaneously manage collections, serve users, and coordinate community programs. The finding therefore suggests that the human dimension of library transformation is not an optional add-on but a core requirement and that it demands a corresponding transformation in LIS education and professional development.

2. Training as an Uneven Key: Why Short-Term Interventions Are Not Enough

The second finding concerns the role of training in TPBIS success. Librarian training emerges as a recurring prerequisite across the literature, whether through certified staff training, implementation teams, technical guidance, or sustained mentoring (Silvina et al., 2023; Nuraini & Widiyarta, 2025; Shahzad et al., 2023). This finding confirms that capacity building is widely

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recognized as essential. However, the review also reveals a critical limitation: short-term training alone is often insufficient when librarians must address complex social problems (Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023; Johnson & Wahler, 2023).

This limitation can be explained by the nature of the competencies required. Technical skills such as operating a library management system can be acquired through short workshops. Social and relational competencies, by contrast, develop through sustained practice, reflection, and mentorship. When librarians are expected to facilitate community empowerment, mediate social conflicts, or support entrepreneurship programs, they need more than procedural knowledge; they need the confidence, judgment, and emotional resilience that come from continuous professional development. This finding therefore suggests that training should not be treated as a one-off intervention but as part of a continuous professional development ecosystem.

This has practical implications for library managers and policymakers in Indonesia, where TPBIS training is often conducted in short workshops with limited follow-up. The review suggests that training design should include mentoring, peer learning, and opportunities for reflective practice. It also implies that training should be context-sensitive tailored to the specific social, economic, and cultural conditions of the communities that libraries serve. A standardized national curriculum may provide a useful foundation, but it cannot substitute for locally grounded capacity building.

3. Fragile Partnerships: Structural, Relational, and Personal Barriers

The third and most consistent finding concerns partnership challenges. Partnership barriers most often include low partner commitment, weak inter-agency coordination, and fragile program sustainability (Hamudy et al., 2026; Nuraini & Widiyarta, 2025; Johnson & Wahler, 2023; Wanner-Freyland & Miljand, 2026). Dependence on a single initiative-taking librarian is a major risk (Hamudy et al., 2026; Safira & Laksmi, 2021). These findings suggest that partnership failure is rarely caused by a single factor; rather, it results from the interaction of structural, relational, and personal factors.

At the structural level, partnerships are constrained by unclear role division, weak institutional mandates, and limited funding. At the relational level, they are constrained by low trust, poor communication, and divergent expectations among partners. At the personal level, they are constrained by the limited capacity and motivation of individual actors particularly when a single librarian bears the burden of coordination. This multi-level analysis aligns with Wanner-Freyland and Miljand's (2026) argument that partner inertia and limited political will are critical barriers to sustainable transformation.

By contrast, the review identifies several conditions associated with more stable partnerships: shared goals, clear role division, agreed communication, shared leadership, and trust (Latulippe et al., 2023; Johnson & Wahler, 2023). Sherman et al. (2025) add that partnerships are most useful when they help libraries read diverse community needs and design more inclusive programs, rather than merely adding formal collaborators. This suggests that partnership quality not partnership quantity is the key variable. A library with a few deeply committed partners may achieve more than a library with many nominal collaborators.

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These findings have implications for how partnerships are designed and governed. Rather than being treated as administrative formalities, partnerships should be understood as relational infrastructures that require deliberate cultivation. This includes investing in trust-building activities, clarifying roles and responsibilities from the outset, and ensuring that leadership is distributed rather than concentrated in a single individual. In the Indonesian context, this may require stronger facilitation from local governments and library authorities, as well as mechanisms for sustaining partnerships beyond the initial program cycle.

4. Implications for Practice and Policy

Taken together, the three findings suggest that the sustainability of TPBIS depends less on infrastructure and more on human and relational factors. Practically, this implies the need to strengthen librarian capacity, secure leadership support, and design deliberative partnerships. Library managers should prioritize continuous professional development, create opportunities for peer learning and mentoring, and recognize the emotional labour involved in community librarianship. Policymakers should ensure that TPBIS training is not reduced to short-term workshops but is embedded in a longer-term capacity-building strategy. They should also provide institutional incentives for partnership building, such as recognition, funding, and coordination mechanisms.

At the institutional level, libraries should move away from the "single fighter" model, in which one highly motivated librarian bears the entire burden of transformation. Instead, they should build teams with complementary skills and distribute leadership across roles. This requires not only additional human resources but also a cultural shift in how library work is understood from individual task execution to collaborative community engagement.

5. Theoretical Implications and Research Gaps

Theoretically, this review contributes to the growing body of literature on libraries as social infrastructures (Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023) and on partnership governance in public services (Latulippe et al., 2023; Wanner-Freyland & Miljand, 2026). It suggests that the human dimension of library transformation encompassing librarian identity, competence, and relational work deserves greater theoretical attention. Existing frameworks on partnership and social inclusion, largely developed in Western contexts, need to be adapted to the institutional and cultural realities of Indonesia.

Several research gaps remain. First, there is a need for validated instruments to measure librarians' social competencies in the Indonesian context. Second, there is a need for longitudinal studies that examine how partnerships evolve over time and what factors sustain them beyond the initial program cycle. Third, there is a need for comparative studies across regions, to understand how local political, economic, and cultural conditions shape TPBIS implementation. Future research could also explore the emotional labour of community librarianship an aspect that is increasingly recognized internationally (Van Melik & Hazeleger, 2023) but remains largely unexamined in Indonesian LIS literature.

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6. Limitations of the Review

This review has several limitations. As a narrative review, it does not claim exhaustive coverage of all available literature on TPBIS or library partnerships. The selection of 15 articles, while based on relevance and quality, may not capture the full diversity of program implementations across Indonesia. In addition, the relatively low citation counts of several recent articles limit the ability to assess their scholarly impact. These limitations are inherent to the narrative review approach, and the findings should be interpreted as a synthesis of the most relevant evidence available rather than as definitive conclusions. Future systematic reviews or empirical studies are needed to test and extend the patterns identified in this article.

CONCLUSIONS

This review shows that librarians' roles in Social Inclusion-Based Library Transformation (TPBIS) have shifted fundamentally from collection management toward learning facilitation, mentoring, and community connection, a transformation documented across Indonesia, the Netherlands, and Sri Lanka. Training emerges as a recurring prerequisite for TPBIS success, yet its implementation remains uneven: short-term workshops are often insufficient when librarians must address complex social problems, and many programs emphasize administrative and technical aspects while paying limited attention to interpersonal and emotional dimensions of community engagement. The most consistent finding concerns partnership challenges, which operate at multiple levels structural (unclear role division, weak institutional mandates, limited funding), relational (low trust, poor communication, divergent expectations), personal (dependence on a single librarian, limited capacity, burnout), policy (short-term project framing, weak political will), and organizational (weak leadership support, lack of recognition for relational work). By contrast, stable partnerships are associated with shared goals, clear role division, agreed communication, shared leadership, and trust, suggesting that partnership quality not quantity is the key variable determining program sustainability. Theoretically, this review contributes to the literature on libraries as social infrastructures and on partnership governance in public services, and it highlights the interconnectedness of librarian roles, training needs, partnership capacity, and sustainability, implying that interventions targeting only one dimension are unlikely to produce lasting outcomes.

Practically, the findings imply that the sustainability of TPBIS depends less on infrastructure and more on human and relational factors. Library managers should prioritize continuous professional development, create opportunities for peer learning and mentoring, and recognize the emotional labour involved in community librarianship, while policymakers should embed TPBIS training in a longer-term capacity-building strategy rather than reducing it to short-term workshops. Library institutions should move away from the "single fighter" model and build teams with complementary skills, distributing leadership across roles, and partnership coordinators should treat partnerships as relational infrastructures that require deliberate cultivation through shared goals, clear roles, agreed communication, and regular reflection. As a narrative review of 15 articles, this study does not claim exhaustive coverage, and its findings should be interpreted as a synthesis of the most relevant evidence available; future research should therefore develop validated instruments to measure librarians' social competencies in the Indonesian context, conduct longitudinal studies on partnership evolution, compare TPBIS implementation across regions,

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explore the emotional labour of community librarianship, and include the perspectives of community partners to provide a more complete understanding of partnership dynamics.

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